

High School have been named among the top 1,000 high schools in the country by U.S. News & World Report. Both are ranked in the top five schools in Arkansas, and the school district is home to a National Blue Ribbon School.

Joye sets a great example of being a hands-on leader, insisting that the board members tour all 23 school campuses at the beginning of the school year to make sure students are provided with a quality learning environment. Joye's husband, Gene, estimates that she spends up to 1,000 hours each year in service to schools.

Perhaps one of Joye's greatest achievements was her influence on education funding in Arkansas and encouraging the State to make it a priority. Her courage to lead the Rogers School Board to challenge education funding helped pave the path for a better education system in Arkansas for students no matter what school district they are enrolled in or where they live.

I had the privilege of serving with Joye as a member of the school board. Her expertise and vision made a lasting mark that will be enjoyed by the community and students for generations after she no longer presides over school board meetings.

Joye has displayed dedication, perseverance and commitment to education. I appreciate her friendship and am grateful for her years of service and efforts devoted to improving the education of Arkansas students.●

IDAHO HOMETOWN HERO MEDAL

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I wish to acknowledge the second year of the presentation of the Idaho Hometown Hero Medal and congratulate the 2012 recipients of this esteemed honor.

This award was established by Drs. Fahim and Naeem Rahim, who, in addition to their professional and medical service, have a belief in community service and a desire to give back to the community and our country. After receiving the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, they decided to return to Idaho and start the Idaho Hometown Hero award to recognize and celebrate individuals who embody the spirit of philanthropy while showing remarkable commitment in both their personal and professional lives. Their efforts to recognize those working for the betterment of our communities play an important role in inspiring all of us.

I am honored to be among the 2011 recipients of this medal, and I congratulate the 2012 award recipients and recognize the efforts of the Rahim brothers, the award's committee members, the cosponsors, volunteers, and other organizations supporting this honor. Ten extraordinary individuals are 2012 Hometown Hero award recipients: Don Aslett, a businessman, author, and builder of Pocatello's Museum of Clean; Cpl Phillip Baldwin, a marine veteran of Afghanistan now training for the Paralympics; Jonathan Cree,

M.D., a physician and medical educator; Patti Farrell, a women's advocate and founder of the Drive for the Cure; Warren E. Nyer, a nuclear energy expert and last survivor of the Manhattan Project; Jody Olsen, a lifelong athlete and promoter of the Southeastern Idaho Senior Games; Rudolfo M. Pena, a teacher, coach, and advocate for Latino education projects; and Bonnie Stoddard, newspaper writer and expert in the history of Clark County. In addition to these awards, there were two honorary medals awarded posthumously to Steve Appleton, the past chief executive officer of Micron Technology and founder of the Micron Foundation, who is survived by his wife and four children, and SGT Ryan Sharp, an Army veteran of Afghanistan, who passed away in December 2011 from injuries received in Kandahar Province.

Those honored through the 2012 Hometown Hero Medal have demonstrated a commitment to hard work, self-improvement, and community service. It is a great privilege to help recognize their outstanding talent and dedication to fellow Idahoans and Americans. I congratulate and thank all of the award recipients for your efforts to strengthen our communities and commend Fahim and Naeem and all those involved with this effort on the second anniversary of the award.●

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER JOY PINNIGER

● Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jennifer Joy Pinniger upon her retirement as president and CEO of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, NSSGA. Joy joined the National Stone Association in December 1996, and she has been "Romancing the Stone" ever since. To her that means helping decisionmakers, the aggregates workforce, and the public understand the purpose and value of the aggregates, or the stone, sand and gravel industry. She has focused NSSGA's advocacy on those issues with the most potential impact on the industry, always aware that the most effective advocates are those members of NSSGA who work every day to produce the construction materials essential to the built environment.

Joy has reminded me on several occasions that her father's roots are in Oklahoma, although as a Navy officer he moved his family around the world. Prior to joining NSSGA, Joy served very ably as chief of staff to former Senator John Warner and as an aide to Virginia Governor John Dalton before that.

Joy has championed the industry in meetings with administration regulatory agencies, always intent on finding solutions that will not only be positive for the aggregates industry but that are right for America. The Rocks Gallery in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History is an example of an

NSSGA-member endowed opportunity for the aggregates story to be told from the vantage point of a world-renowned educational institution—an example of teamwork between innovative members and the NSSGA team quarter-backed by Joy Pinniger.

I have had the pleasure of working with Joy as she led the NSSGA's advocacy for passage of the last two surface transportation authorization bills. Joy realized early on that involvement of the public—those affected by the need to get to and from jobs on a daily basis, to take parents to the doctor, to attend children's soccer games; in reality all of us—was critical to success in moving surface transportation legislation forward. She worked tirelessly facilitating NSSGA member contacts with community leaders and lawmakers to build momentum for this often overlooked national priority. Success came in the form of passage of SAFETEA-LU in 2005 and MAP-21 in 2012.

Joy's advocacy leadership extended well beyond transportation to those regulatory issues affecting the aggregates industry. She continually emphasized the industry's ethics and credibility through NSSGA member company commitments to safety and health resulting in 11 years of record-breaking achievements.

With diplomatic leadership, Joy's policy, management, and motivational strength has helped NSSGA members reinforce message and guide relation bridges to fend off unjustified regulations like tightened standards for "farm dust," and legislation that does not accurately distinguish aggregates operations from others.

Joy Pinniger has led the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association with distinction and integrity. I will miss her steadfast leadership, but congratulate her on her retirement and extend best wishes for whatever she chooses to do next.●

NORTHEAST WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE

● Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate Northeast Wisconsin Technical College for its 100th anniversary.

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, founded in 1912 as the City Vocational Schools in Green Bay and Marinette, has grown exponentially in size and impact over the past century. From its earliest offerings of courses in machine shop, woodworking, bookkeeping, and shorthand to today's workforce development in business management, engineering technologies and web development, it has maintained a commitment to providing students with exceptional hands-on training in traditional, new and emerging sectors.

I am proud to have supported NWTC throughout my time in the Senate, working to secure funding for various educational programs and the N.E.W. Clinic, where patients have access to

much needed, quality medical care while the next generation of health care workers receives exceptional, hands-on training. The N.E.W. Clinic, like NWTC, has become a tremendous asset to the residents of Wisconsin.

Today, NWTC graduates more students than all other Green Bay area colleges combined, preparing tens of thousands of students for careers through its 180 programs of study. For the last 2 years, NWTC has rated in the top 10 percent of community colleges nationally as ranked by the Aspen Institute.

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College has built a strong reputation and steadfast foundation that helps support and grow the regional economy. With statistics showing that 95 percent of its 2011 graduates continue to work in Wisconsin and 73 percent remain in the region, NWTC also shapes the local economy. Students, thousands of area businesses, their employees, and the entire region all benefit from NWTC's commitment to building partnerships and alliances that help everyone succeed.

On behalf of our entire Nation, I join the people of Wisconsin in recognizing and commending Northeast Wisconsin Technical College for providing 100 years of outstanding service and quality education to its students. Today, we honor the leaders who founded the college, and all of the faculty, staff, and students who enrich Wisconsin's long, proud tradition of excellence in education.●

ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today I wish to honor an outstanding nonprofit in Columbia, MD, Enterprise Community Partners, on the occasion of its 30th Anniversary.

In 1982, Jim Rouse and his wife Patty founded Enterprise Community Partners as a neighborhood-based partnership to revitalize communities. They founded Enterprise with the ambitious goal of making sure every American lives in a decent, affordable home. Over the years, this organization has grown to be a leading provider of capital and expertise for affordable housing in thriving communities. Today, Terri Ludwig leads the organization as it continues on the important work of its founders.

Enterprise Community Partners has invested more than \$11.5 billion to build and preserve nearly 300,000 affordable rental and for-sale homes and create more than 410,000 jobs nationwide. This includes almost \$1.2 billion invested directly in Maryland—building and preserving thousands of homes in the State. Because of Enterprise, over 14,000 individuals and families have a place to call home in Maryland.

As a member of the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, I put money in the federal checkbook to build and protect our communities. Providing safe, affordable and adequate

housing has always been one of my top priorities. Safe, sustainable, and affordable housing is essential for community growth and stability. Kids in quality housing do better in schools, neighborhoods have much less crime, and communities are stronger.

In 1992, I worked with Senator Kit Bond to create the HOPE VI program which revolutionized public housing by leveraging public and private resources to replace dangerous and run-down public housing projects with mixed-income communities that integrated schools, businesses and community services alongside public, affordable and market rate housing.

HOPE VI has been successful in transforming communities and transforming the lives of people living in public housing. Enterprise has been an important partner in stabilizing Baltimore's stressed communities and encouraging investment by residents and businesses so that neighborhoods in Baltimore remain places to live, work, shop and worship.

Enterprise stories include families who, due to a reduction in hours at work and layoffs, are at risk of foreclosure; young adults who age out of foster care and face homelessness; and homeless individuals with disabilities. Enterprise develops and preserves affordable housing in communities linking people to opportunities for success.

The Enterprise Green Communities Initiative is the first national framework for green affordable housing. The 5-year, \$555 million initiative plans to build more than 8,500 environmentally healthy homes for low-income families. It provides grants, financing, tax credit equity and technical assistance to developers who meet Green Communities Criteria for affordable housing that promotes health, conserves energy and natural resources, and provides easy access to jobs, schools, and services.

Four years ago, Enterprise announced the formation of the Save America's Neighborhoods Campaign, a coalition of national and local organizations concerned about the foreclosure crisis' impacts on communities. The coalition's efforts were important contributors to establishing the Neighborhood Stabilization Program at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which offers grants to help families and communities at risk of foreclosure.

Enterprise should be recognized for its work to sustain and restore thriving communities nationwide. Enterprise tackles some of the toughest problems in our communities and continues to transform both communities and families throughout the country. They invest in neighborhoods that are working together to solve their own problems for the collective good of the community.

I thank the volunteers, staff, board members and foundations supporting Enterprise Community Partners for all of their work, for their commitment to each other, for their commitment to

community, and for their commitment to Maryland. And I congratulate you on this milestone.●

RECOGNIZING LACASSE BAT COMPANY

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as you are aware, baseball is considered our national pastime. Every spring millions of Americans eagerly await the crack of a wooden bat as baseball and softball season begin. With this in mind, today I rise to recognize and commend the success of LaCasse Bat Company, located in Skowhegan, ME and its owner, Jesse LaCasse.

Mr. LaCasse is a former local baseball standout, playing at Saint Joseph's College of Maine, where he earned a degree in Sports Management. While in college, he was inducted into the Saint Joseph's Athletic Hall of Fame. As a hitting fanatic who was driven by his love of the game, he began manufacturing wooden bats for his personal use in 2006. The custom bats caught on with his summer league teammates, and soon he was making bats for individual players, adding a logo and the player's name to the design.

LaCasse Bat Company, a one-person operation, was founded in 2008 using local Maine materials in production. From cutting the trees to the final product, each step of the development of these bats is meticulously crafted. LaCasse Bat Company uses premium quality wood and makes bats from solid ash, birch, beech, and maple. Mr. LaCasse turns each bat by hand on a wood lathe, a process which takes roughly 15 to 20 minutes, and brands it with his logo. Through this careful method, Mr. LaCasse is able to fine-tune the balance of the bat and make each bat distinctive to the individual player. This personal touch and dedication to craftsmanship contributes to the truly unique nature of each hand-made bat.

In 2010, LaCasse Bat Company teamed with Subway Restaurants to handcraft four custom-colored bats to be donated at the 2010 Senior League World Series held in Bangor, ME. These were the first colored bats made by LaCasse Bats and each features the green, yellow, and white colors of the Subway franchises.

Since the exposure of the 2010 Senior World Series, LaCasse has seen a high demand for tailor-made and colored bats. LaCasse Bats takes every aspect of personalization into account, offering customization of handle, barrel, and logo colors and sizes, as well as the specific bat weight and type of wood. LaCasse Bats currently supplies teams from Little League through college in the United States and Europe, with most of its sales coming from Maine. As sales continue to grow, Mr. LaCasse hopes someday one of his bats will make it to the plate in Major League Baseball.

As a small business, LaCasse Bat Company's success in just a few short